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Influence of Human Capital Management on Customer Satisfaction in Game Lodges and Safari Camps in National Parks in Uganda

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Abstract

Human capital management (HCM) involves a paradigm in which employee staffing perceives people as assets (human capital) whose current value can be measured and whose future value can be enhanced through investment. A satisfied customer gives the profit to the business. However, Hotel industry in Uganda has faced a challenge of low occupancy for some time now. More importantly is that most Owners and Managers of Game Lodges and Camps located in National Parks in Uganda have not taken time to evaluate service quality and guest loyalty for purposes of coming up with the attributes that have the most impact on guest satisfaction. Therefore there was need to assess role human capital management on customer satisfaction in game lodges and safari camps in national parks in Uganda. The purpose of the study was therefore to establish the role human capital management on customer satisfaction in game lodges and safari camps in national parks in Uganda. It explicitly sought to understand the human capital management practices that are used by the game lodges and safari camps in national parks and their influence on customer satisfaction. The study profiled the existing human capital management practices, determine the influence of human capital management on customer satisfaction and investigate the challenges facing human capital management in game lodges and safari camps in national parks in Uganda. Cross sectional research design was employed and the study population constituted 380 employees

of the game lodges and safari camps in national parks in Uganda. The managers and employees of the lodges and camps were the unit of observation. Stratified random sampling technique was used to determine the sample size. Stratified random sampling technique was preferred because the population to be sampled was divided into homogenous groups based on characteristics considered important to the indicators being measured. Nine managers for lodges and camps were conveniently selected for the study. Yamane simplified formula was used to calculate the sample size for the employees to be 195. Questionnaires and interview guide were used to collect the data. The collected quantitative data was analyzed using SPSS. Both descriptive and inferential statistics will be used in the analysis. The specific descriptive statistics included mean, standard deviation, percentage and frequency, while particular inferential statistics were correlation and regression analyses. The qualitative data collected using the interview schedules was analyzed using content analysis and results interpreted. The findings revealed that all the three human capital management practices used in this study had positive and significant relationship with customer satisfaction in game lodges and safari camps in national parks in Uganda. The findings revealed that there was a positive and significant relationship between capacity building and customer satisfaction ($\beta = .350$, $p=0.000$); there existed a positive and significant relationship between reward and customer satisfaction ($\beta = .477$, $p=0.000$) and finally the findings revealed a positive and significant relationship between work environment and customer satisfaction ($\beta = 0.185$, $p=0.000$). In addition the study tested the mediating effect of challenges on the relationship between human capital management practices and customer satisfaction in game lodges and safari camps in national parks in Uganda. The findings revealed a partial intervening effect of challenges on the relationship between human capital management practices and customer satisfaction. Based on the findings, the study concluded that it is important for the human capital managements of game lodges and safari camps in national parks in Uganda to focus on training their employees, rewarding their employees and providing conducive working environment for the employees. It was concluded that the organizations should organize regular hospitality courses since such courses have been found to improve the knowledge and skills of employees in the industry, and that of existing and potential managers. The study hence recommended that managers should adopt new and latest methods of training their employees on modern day's ways of handling customers. Some managers in the hospitality industry in Uganda have appealed to government to continuously help train their staff in customer service and other technical disciplines in the hospitality industry.

Keywords: *HCM, Capacity Building, Reward, Work Environment, Challenges, Customer Satisfaction.*

1.1 Background of the Study

Human capital management (HCM) is an integrated effort to manage and develop human capabilities to in order to significantly achieve high level of performance (Emmanuel, Oluwayemisi & Balogun, 2015). Human capital management practices are set of practices that are focused on organizational needs to provide specific competencies. It involves a paradigm in which

employee staffing perceives people as assets (human capital) whose current value can be measured and whose future value can be enhanced through investment. These practices can be categorized into workforce acquisition, management and optimization and traditional administrative tasks which includes workforce planning and strategy, recruitment on boarding, employee training, reporting and analytics (Shola, Adnan & Saad, 2017).

A study conducted in South Africa indicated that South Africa offers beautiful beaches, luxury game lodges with a variety of wild life, world-class casinos and resorts, shopping malls and extensive sports and recreational facilities (Kleynhans & Zhou, 2012). In a couple of years, the number of hotels in key locations in South Africa such as Cape Town, Johannesburg, Pretoria and Durban, has increased to accommodate a growing number of travelers, and, in recent years, the growth in occupancy rates and average room rates has been robust. However, South Africa faces certain challenges which may adversely influence international tourism (Starr, Ganco & Campbell, 2018). The challenges include crime, inflation and perceptions about the service industry in the county. South African guests have a higher expectation of the quality of service when compared to that of guests from beyond South African borders.

The National Parks in Uganda are considered as a great Tourism attraction as most of them are still in their natural state with very minimal human interference. The number of annual U.S. visitors grew by 31 percent from 2010 to 2014, according to data from the Uganda Tourism Board. In recent times however, these protected areas have attracted many investors who want to take advantage of the untapped ready market.

1.2 Problem Statement and Justification

Human capital Management support plays an important role in enabling employees to provide high quality service to customers who in turn will attract many customers; satisfied customer gives the profit to the business. The customer satisfaction is highly depends upon the employees attitude and the service quality offered to him. The profitability and smooth earnings also affect the employees and competent human capital performance. However, for hotel industry in Uganda this is not the situation; hotel industry in Uganda has faced a challenge of low occupancy for some time now (Kamukama & Nakaweesi, 2016). The objective of any hospitality establishment is thus to monitor and assess customer satisfaction every time a service is being offered to the customer. Therefore there is need to assess role human capital management on customer satisfaction in game lodges and safari camps in national parks in Uganda. As much as studies have been undertaken on the relationship between guest satisfaction, loyalty and high-quality service, the impact of human capital in Game Lodges and Safari Camps in National parks in Uganda has not been adequately addressed.

1.3 Research Objectives

- i. To establish the influence of capacity building on customer satisfaction in game lodges and safari camps in national parks in Uganda.
- ii. To determine the influence of reward on customer satisfaction in game lodges and safari camps in national parks in Uganda.

- iii. To assess the influence of work environment on customer satisfaction in game lodges and safari camps in national parks in Uganda.
- iv. To investigate the mediating effect of challenges on the relationship between human capital management practices and customer satisfaction in game lodges and safari camps in national parks in Uganda.

1.4 Research Hypotheses

H₀₁: Capacity building has no statistically significant influence on customer satisfaction in game lodges and safari camps in national parks in Uganda.

H₀₂: Reward has no statistically significant influence on customer satisfaction in game lodges and safari camps in national parks in Uganda.

H₀₃: Work environment has no statistically significant influence on customer satisfaction in game lodges and safari camps in national parks in Uganda.

H₀₄: Challenges have no mediating effect on the relationship between human capital management practices and customer satisfaction in game lodges and safari camps in national parks in Uganda.

1.5 Conceptual Framework

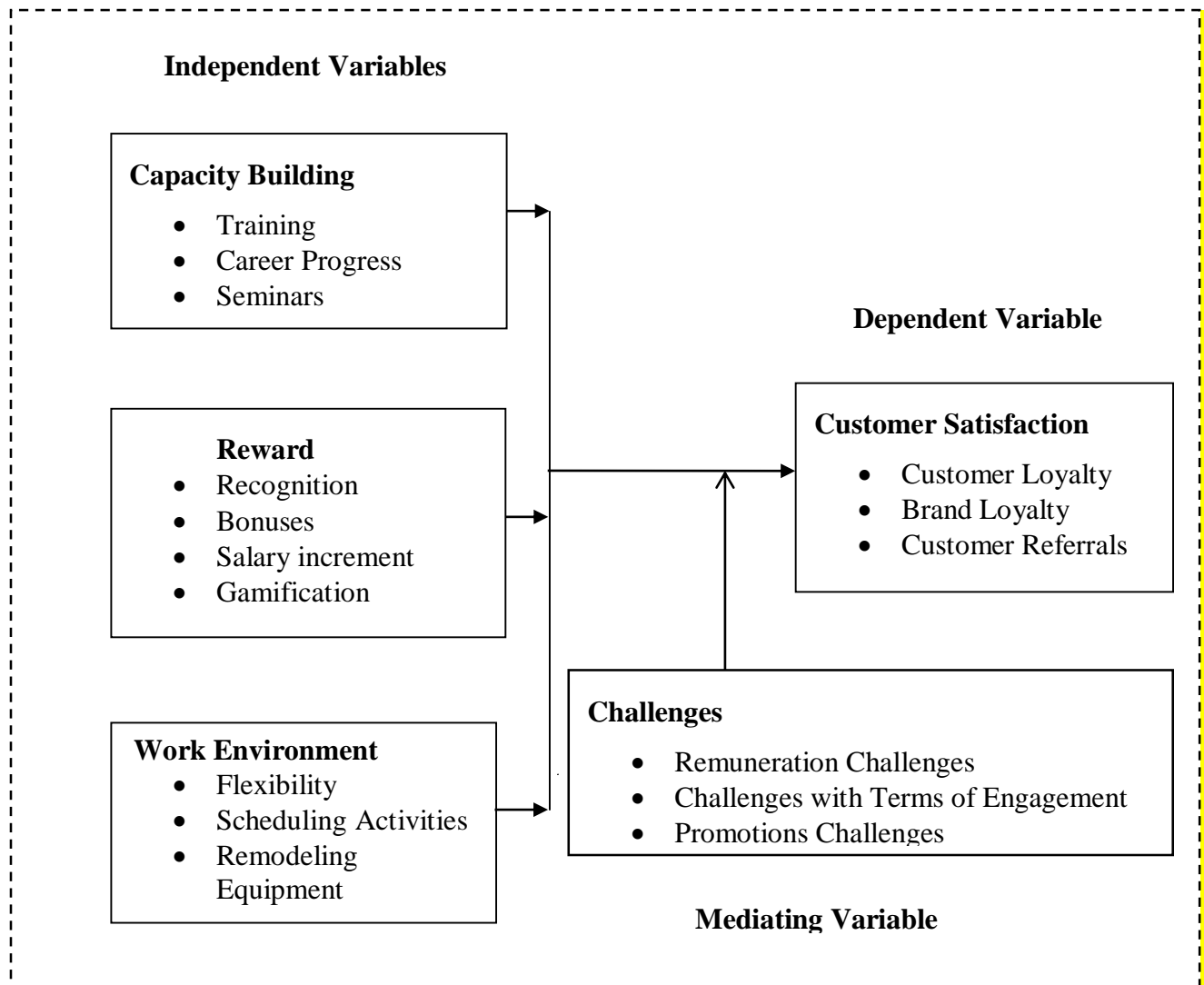


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Source: *Researcher (2019)*

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 Empirical Review

2.1.1 Capacity Building and Customer Satisfaction

Ojukuku (2014) conducted a study whose purpose was to determine the impact of capacity building and manpower development on staff performance in selected organizations in Nigeria.

The study employed survey research design and a target population of 128 managers of randomly selected firms in south western Nigeria from which primary data was collected using structured questionnaire. The findings of the study revealed a significant positive relationship between capacity building and staff performance in the selected organizations. It was concluded that capacity building and manpower development activities result in new knowledge, skills and management capabilities, and should therefore be the focus of greater attention and efforts by organizations.

Githinji and Muli (2018) evaluated employee engagement strategies and employee performance of Air Kenya Limited. The study was based on two objectives which entailed adequacy customer satisfaction training and timeliness of customer satisfaction training. It was found that the training offered was inadequate. It was found that the training timeliness of customer satisfaction training was based on the bank needs which the bank closely connected to evaluation of employees instead of looking at the performance appraisal of employees. Lastly the banks ought to invest heavily in customer satisfaction training through funding so as to improve individual and organization performance.

2.1.2 Reward and Customer Satisfaction

Njanja, Maina, Kibet and Njagi (2013) in their study examined the Effect of reward on employee performance: A case of Kenya Power and Lighting Company Ltd., Nakuru, Kenya. The study aimed at determining the effect of reward on employee performance at KPLC; specifically the effect of cash bonus on employee performance. The research adopted correlation research design with a sample size of 68 management employees who responded to the questionnaires used to collect the data. The findings revealed that cash bonus had no effect on employee performance. This was because those who received cash bonuses and those who did not all agree that the cash bonus affects their performance the same.

Shola, Adnan and Saad (2017) examined the influence of human resources management on service quality of risk business in Northwestern Nigeria. The study adopted secondary data which review related literatures from journal articles and other literatures on assessment of the concepts. Finding: indicated that there was a significant relationship between human resources management practices and service quality in the insurance industry. It also revealed that Human resource management practices directly affect overall service quality in terms of customer base, customer retention, overall profit, productivity and risk improvement to the customers.

2.1.3 Work Environment and Customer Satisfaction

Awan and Tahir (2015) conducted a study to establish the impact of working environment on employee's productivity: A case study of banks and insurance companies in Pakistan. The basic objective of the study was to measure the impact of working environment on productivity of employees. The organizations like banks and insurance companies were selected for conducting the study. A closed ended questionnaire was developed to get feedback from target audience and different statistical methods were used to derive results from the collected data. Based on the findings it was observed that the factors like supervisor support, relation with co-workers, training and development, attractive and fast incentives and recognition plans, adequate work load at work

place were helpful in developing a working environment that has positive impact on employee's level of productivity in the organizations.

Chika and Dominic (2017) examined the effect of work environment on employee productivity: A Case Study of Edo City Transport Services Benin City, Edo State Nigeria. The main objective of the study was geared towards ascertaining whether the nature of work environment lead to low productivity, absenteeism and lateness among employees. To achieve the study objectives and for the purpose of the study, secondary data was used. The findings of the study revealed a positive and significant relationship between work environment and employee productivity. The study pointed out that if good office environment is provided for employees, it will go a long way to enhance their morale and performance.

2.1.3 Challenges facing Human Capital Management Practices

Namabwe (2012) determined challenges facing human resource management in international humanitarian relief organizations in Kenya. It was found that due to competition, attracting the right people for job openings was a major challenge to the organization. The study also established that high cost of training employees was a major challenge. The fluctuating foreign exchange and inflation have been cited as major challenge to the employee compensation strategy by the organizations. The study established that inadequate medical facilities were a challenge to the effective management of the health and safety in the organizations. The budgetary constrain has made difficult to implement the recommendations of the staff appraisal process in the organizations thereby making the performance management in the organizations not manageable.

Njau (2012) established challenges facing the human resource management function at Kenyatta National Hospital. Results that human resource managers at Kenyatta National Hospital experience challenges of policies and procedures that curtail recruitment such as delayed information from line managers on staffing requirements for departments. Influential people canvass for positions leading to a compromised selection process. Human resource managers at Kenyatta National Hospital experience challenges related to training and development due to differing training needs, preferences and learning potential of various cadres of staff. Lack of employee satisfaction, poor working conditions are also challenges which cause staff grievances.

2.2 Theoretical Review

2.2.1. The Resource Based View (RBV)

The theory was proposed by Wernerfelt (1984). This theory derives from the idea of economist Edith Penrose. The mainstay of this theory of the firm is that resources including employees systems and business partners are combined into ways of working which are rare, inimitable, valuable and non-substitutable so that they become resources of competitive advantage, (Shaun Tyson, 2006). HR systems create the human capital pool of skilled people so that they can sustain what Wright et al, (2001) described as strategically relevant behaviors. Human resources, by adding value, uniqueness and the most effective way to use resources, tend to increase the competitive advantage of a company in comparison to another in terms of customer satisfaction (Miller and Shamsie, 1996; Porter, 1991). The (R.B.V) tends to ignore the baseline of specific

industries as it takes into account the differences of firms in the same sector as a competitive advantage.

2.2.2 Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory

The theory was proposed by Maslow (1943). According to Maslow, human beings have needs that are organized into a hierarchy, illustrated by a pyramid. Those basic needs at the bottom of the pyramid, such as food and shelter, must be met first. Once these basic needs are accomplished, employees seek to feel safe (such as job security), be loved (friendships and relationships), have a sense of accomplishment (such as through recognition or a job well done) and finally, for self-actualization (work that is personally fulfilling). This theory is a key foundation in understanding how drive and motivation are correlated when discussing human behavior. Examining different functions of the organizations such as salary, administration and employment, results showed that based on EEO (Equal Employment Opportunity), most sectors tended to be very good at utilizing HCM best practices to activities within the firm and that much improvement was required to get business up to the levels of HCM best practice utilized abroad.

3.0 Research Methodology

This study adopted cross sectional research design. The major purpose of cross sectional research design was to describe the state of affairs as it is at the time and bring out the distinct information about each facet under study. The study covered all game lodges and safari camps in national parks of Uganda. There are forty five game lodges and safari camps in national parks in Uganda. National Parks and Game Reserves in Uganda provide numerous wildlife safari options in Uganda. The country offers ten organized National Parks, as well as a number of Natural Forests and Natural Reserve areas, with a broad range of different safaris and wildlife experience. The target population of this study was 380 made up employees of the game lodges and safari camps in national parks in Uganda. The employees were made of 9 managers and 371 heads of departments of the game lodges and safari camps in national parks in Uganda. The managers and the heads of departments therefore formed the unit of observation. The target population was as attached on Appendix III. Stratified random sampling technique was used to determine the sample size of 195 employees. Primary data for this study was collected through the administration of the questionnaires and interview schedules. Collected data was edited, classified, coded and keyed into the computer for analysis. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to aid the processing and analysis of the data collected. The particular inferential statistic was regression and correlation analysis. The analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to analyze the overall model significance. The individual regression coefficients were used to confirm whether the independent variables affect customer's satisfaction.

4.0 Findings and Discussion

4.1 Descriptive Statistics

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics on Human Capital Management Practices

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean	SD
<u>Capacity Building</u>							
Our human capital management organizes regular hospitality Courses meant to improve the knowledge and skills of our employees, existing and potential managers. These practices for achieving capacity management objectives are very useful on customer satisfaction	0.00%	3.30%	3.30%	26.50%	66.90%	4.570	0.717
Our HCM can be holistically presumed to be knowledge, skills, competencies and other attributes embodied in individuals which guide service delivery	0.00%	5.30%	3.30%	43.00%	48.30%	4.344	0.784
<u>Reward</u>							
There's no better reward than giving our employees an experience that they've always wanted since our employees value meaningful experiences more than gift cards or physical rewards.	0.00%	7.90%	2.60%	42.40%	47.00%	4.285	0.859
Our HR capabilities can be linked to internal employee satisfaction through rewards and organizational effectiveness.	0.00%	5.30%	3.30%	42.40%	49.00%	4.351	0.785
<u>Work Environment</u>							
Working environment in our organizations and job	0.00%	5.30%	3.30%	48.30%	43.00%	4.291	0.771

satisfaction is important for customers satisfaction								
Better outcomes and increased productivity in our organization is attributed to better workplace environment; better physical environment of work stations boosts the employees and ultimately improve their productivity.	0.00%	4.00%	3.30%	33.10%	59.60%	4.483	0.747	
Average						4.387	0.777	

Based on the results in Table 1, majority of the respondents 93.40% (66.90% + 26.50%) agreed that their human capital management organized regular hospitality courses meant to improve the knowledge and skills of the employees, existing and potential managers. These practices for achieving capacity management objectives were found to be very useful on customer satisfaction. 3.30% of the respondents were not sure while another 3.30% disagreed with the statement. The results had a mean of 4.570 and standard deviation of 0.717 indicating that most of the employees agreed with the statement; however their responses were sharply varied. The study findings also show that most of the respondents (91.30%) were in agreement with the statement that their HCM could be holistically presumed to be knowledge, skills, competencies and other attributes embodied in individuals who guide service delivery, 3.30% were neutral while 5.30% of the respondents were in disagreement. The responses on the statement had a mean and standard deviation of 4.344 and 0.784 respectively. The findings were in agreement with the findings of Ojukuku (2014) which found a significant positive relationship between capacity building and staff performance in the selected organizations. The study also established that capacity building and manpower development activities result in new knowledge, skills and management capabilities, and should therefore be the focus of greater attention and efforts by organizations.

In addition, the results indicate that most of the respondents (89.40%) agreed that there's no better reward than giving their employees an experience that they've always wanted since our employees value meaningful experiences more than gift cards or physical rewards, 2.60% were neutral and 7.90% disagreed with the statement. This was affirmed by a mean and standard deviation of 4.285 and 0.859 respectively implying that most of the heads of departments in the games lodges and safari camps were in agreement with the statement on reward for the employees. In addition to this, most (91.40%) of the respondents were in agreement to the fact that their HR capabilities could be linked to internal employee satisfaction through rewards and organizational effectiveness. The results had a mean of 4.351 and standard deviation of 0.785. The results are contrary to the conclusion made by Njanja, Maina, Kibet and Njagi (2013) that, cash bonus had no effect on employee performance. This was because those who received cash bonuses and those who did not

all agree that the cash bonus affects their performance the same. Njanja et al (2013) recommended that the organization should focus on changing the intrinsic nature and content of jobs; this will increase employee motivation as employees will get more autonomy more challenging job assignments and responsibilities.

Regarding work environment as one of the human capital management practices, majority (91.30%) of the respondents were positive that working environment in their organizations and job satisfaction was important for customers satisfaction. The results had a mean and standard deviation of 4.291 and 0.771 respectively implying that most of the heads of departments believed work environment had influence on performance of the employees which then help in boosting customer satisfaction. Further regarding work environment, the results indicated that majority (92.70%) were in agreement with the statement that better outcomes and increased productivity in their departments and organizations was attributed to better workplace environment; better physical environment of work stations boosts the employees and ultimately improve their productivity. The responses on this indicator had a mean of 4.483 and standard deviation of 0.747. These results on work environment were found to be consistent with the findings of Awan and Tahir (2015) which found that the factors like supervisor support, relation with co-workers, training and development, attractive and fast incentives and recognition plans, adequate work load at work place were helpful in developing a working environment that has positive impact on employee's level of productivity in the organizations.

In addition to the questionnaire, interview schedules were administered to nine managers of game lodges and safari camps in national parks in Uganda. The managers were asked to indicate whether their organizations were employing human capital management practices or no and if yes, which one. The first manager indicated that;

"...Yes in our organization we create a conducive working environment where staff interact with management. In addition, we organize seminars and workshops for our employees. Further, we always strive to increase engagement between employees and the management. Improving employee engagement and productivity is paramount to enhancing a company. Engaged and productive employees provide better services and can positively impact the efficiency and effectively of a company. To achieve this, the first step is to know how to measure employee engagement. In our organization we achieve this through the following ways; Employee satisfaction surveys or other quantitative data collection methods and establishing and maintaining communication lines as part of a feedback mechanism for our organization."

Another manager indicated that;

"...Yes. We reward our employees by issuing certificates and incentives to the best performing employees. In addition we provide the right tools to our employees which are meant to supplement their performance and improve their productivity. Appropriate employee management software and tools have been found to make us work with our employees easier. And providing employees with the right tools can make them more efficient and effective in their work, which enhances company performance."

Another manager indicated that;

“...Yes we do adopt human capital management practices in our organization. Our lodge is located deep in the forest, so we allow our employee to work for one moth continuously then we provide them with one week break. In addition, we maintain constant communication with our employees in and out of the organization. Constant communication with the team shows that we care about our employee opinions and are open to feedback. We realized that, regular check-ins becomes a platform for feedback mechanism with the team and building rapport amongst the team.”

The other managers had similar opinion. They indicated that;

“...Yes we employ human capital management practices. We give our employees loans to cater for their problems; we always strive to empower our staffs to make decisions on behalf of the lodge. We in our organization have employed nurses whose duty is to attend to our staff in case of any health issue arises.”

Finally the managers indicated that;

“...Yes. We recognize the efforts by our employees to ensure our organization succeeds. In our organization we have realized that recognizing employees when they reach important milestones is important and makes them feel as though the many years they may have put in were worth it. As such, we create a database of every employee's start date and either give them unique presents individually on the anniversary of those dates or at the awards ceremony closest to them. This is just a great way to say "thank you" for all the years of hard work they've dedicated to our organization.”

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics on Challenges

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean	SD
Stiff competition and attracting the right people for job openings is a major challenge to our organization	4.60%	12.60%	14.60%	35.10%	33.10%	3.795	1.168
High cost of training employees is a major challenge and impediment to service delivery	1.30%	8.60%	22.50%	32.50%	35.10%	3.914	1.019
Fluctuating foreign exchange and inflation are major challenge to the employee compensation strategy in our organization	0.70%	4.60%	12.60%	45.00%	37.10%	4.132	0.854
Budgetary constrain has made difficult to implement the recommendations of the staff appraisal process	5.30%	13.20%	11.30%	38.40%	31.80%	3.781	1.183
We experience challenges of policies and procedures that curtail recruitment on staffing requirements for departments	2.00%	11.90%	11.30%	37.70%	37.10%	3.960	1.070
Lack of employee satisfaction, poor working conditions are also challenges which cause staff grievances.	4.60%	15.90%	11.90%	30.50%	37.10%	3.795	1.229
Average						3.896	1.087

Results in Table 2 show that most (68.20%) of the heads of the departments were in agreement with the fact that stiff competition and attracting the right people for job openings was a major challenge to their organizations, 14.60% were neutral while 17.20% of the respondents were not in agreement with the statement. The results had a mean of 3.795 and standard deviation of 1.168 implying that stiff competition is a serious challenge to the game lodges and safari camps in

national parks in Uganda. The results in addition show that most (67.60%) of the respondents were of the opinion that high cost of training employees was a major challenge and impediment to service delivery in game lodges and safari camps in national parks in Uganda, 22.50% took a neutral ground on the same, while 9.90% others disagreed with the statement. The results had a mean and standard deviation of 3.914 and 1.019 respectively.

In addition, the results reveal that majority (82.10%) of the respondents agreed their organizations were dealing with the challenge of fluctuating foreign exchange and inflation to the employee compensation strategy, 12.60% of the heads were undecided, while 5.30% believed otherwise. The results had a mean and standard deviation of 4.132 and 0.854 respectively. This implies most of the heads of departments in these organizations believe that fluctuation on foreign exchange and inflation is a major challenge facing their organizations; however their responses sharply differed. Regarding budgetary constrain, majority (70.20%) of the respondents were convinced that budgetary constrain had made it difficult for them to implement the recommendations of the staff appraisal process. The results had a mean of 3.781 and standard deviation of 1.183.

Similarly, majority (74.80%) of the respondents agreed that they were experiencing challenges of policies and procedures that curtailed recruitment on staffing requirements for departments, 11.30% were neutral about the statement, while 13.90% others disagreed with the statement. The results had a mean of 3.960 and standard deviation of 1.070. Finally, it was established that majority (67.60%) of the respondents were in agreement on the fact that lack of employee satisfaction, poor working conditions were also challenges which caused staff grievances. This was affirmed by a mean and standard deviation of 3.795 and 1.229 respectively. The responses on indicators of challenges had an average mean and standard deviation of 3.896 and 1.087 respectively implying that most of the respondents were in agreement with the statements on challenges; however the responses sharply varied. These results concur with the findings of Namabwe (2013) which indicated that competition, attracting the right people for job openings were major challenges to the organizations. The study also established that high cost of training employees was a major challenge; the fluctuating foreign exchange and inflation have been cited as major challenge to the employee compensation strategy by the organizations. The study established that inadequate medical facilities were a challenge to the effective management of the health and safety in the organizations. The budgetary constrain has made difficult to implement the recommendations of the staff appraisal process in the organizations thereby making the performance management in the organizations not manageable.

In addition to the questionnaire, interview schedules were administered to managers and the managers were asked to indicate challenges of human capital management in their organizations. One of the managers indicated that;

“...In this industry we face a number of challenges with human capital management, key among them includes; communication challenges where sometimes there is breakdown in communication between the employees and our guests, most of the employees we hire lack the basic skills in this industry, so we have to spend a lot of resources training them to fit. The government requires that all employees pay tax, this is a challenge to most of our low income earning employees because taxation puts a lot of pressure on their pay slips.”

Another manager responded by indicating that;

“...this industry faces numerous challenges with human capital management. In our case we have the tradition of promoting our employees based on academic qualification, but sometimes it becomes difficult to promote employees who do not meet the academic requirements for promotion, this demoralizes them and renders them inefficient when they have to stay in one job position for the longest time. Recruitment is the most significant of the human resource functions, due to its role in creating a positive impression about the business in the labour market to attract qualified employees who are interested in working for the organisation and allows the company to effectively select the best applicants, the challenge we have in this country is that it is difficult to attract hospitality graduates to the hospitality industry since parents do not like their children to enter the hospitality industry because it has low wages compared to other industries”

In addition another manager added that;

“...Hospitality industry need effective training programmes to face the shortage of qualified employees, especially the lodges and safari camps in this country which look for qualified employees to increase their performance efficiency. Employees prefer to work in companies with advanced training programmes for career development. Here in Uganda the hospitality industry depends mainly on service quality as a competitive advantage to acquire the customers of a labour-intensive industry. However, the challenge is that some companies consider the training process as a waste of money and time. Small lodges and camps have a limited budget to fund training programmes.”

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics on Customer Satisfaction

Statement	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean	SD
We have a good number of loyal customers	0.00%	2.60%	23.20%	74.20%	4.715	0.508
Our organization has been receiving positive feedback from our esteemed clients	0.00%	9.90%	53.00%	37.10%	4.272	0.632
Our organization reputation has improved over the years	1.30%	22.50%	51.00%	25.20%	4.000	0.730
Our market share has been growing continuously over sometime	4.00%	13.20%	27.80%	55.00%	4.338	0.855
Our employees have registered their satisfaction with their jobs through their full commitment in serving clients	0.00%	2.60%	16.60%	80.80%	4.781	0.475
We have always delivered quality services that has met clients expectations	0.00%	2.60%	31.80%	65.60%	4.629	0.537

Average

4.456 0.623

Based on the results in Table 3, majority (97.40%) of the respondents agreed that their organizations had a good number of loyal customers, 2.60% were neutral about the statement, while none of the respondents disagreed. The result had a mean and standard deviation of 4.715 and 0.508 respectively implying that most of the respondents believe their organizations have increased the number of their loyal customers. In addition the result show that most (90.10%) of the respondents were in agreement with fact that their organizations had been receiving positive feedback from their esteemed clients, 9.90% were undecided about the statement. The results had a mean of 4.272 and standard deviation of 0.632 implying that the adoption of human capital management practices are yielding results in these organizations.

Further, the results show that most (76.20%) of the respondents were in agreement with the statement that their organizations' reputations had improved over the years, 22.50% of the respondents were not sure, while 1.30% disagreed with the statement. The results had a mean of 4.000 and standard deviation of 0.730 implying that most of the organizations have had improvement in their reputation; however others have not had improvement in their reputation. The results similarly show that most (82.80%) of the respondents were confident that their market share had been growing continuously over sometime, 13.20% were undecided, while 4.00% disagreed. The results had a mean of 4.338 and standard deviation of 0.855.

Concerning employee satisfaction, most (97.40%) of the respondents agreed that their employees had registered their satisfaction with their jobs through their full commitment in serving clients, 2.60% others were neutral concerning the statement on employee satisfaction. The results had a mean and standard deviation of 4.781 and 0.475 respectively. Finally, the results show that majority (97.40%) of the respondents indicated that they always delivered quality services that met clients expectations, 2.60% others were neutral about the statement. The results on the statement had a mean of 4.629 and standard deviation of 0.537 implying that most of the respondents agreed with the statement; however their responses sharply differed.

In addition to the questionnaire, interview schedules were administered to the managers of game lodges and safari camps in national parks in Uganda. The managers were asked to indicate whether the human capital management practices they adopted in any, had effect on customer satisfaction in their organizations. One of the managers indicated that;

"...Yes the human capital management practices we employ have significant effect on the customer satisfaction. In our organization we provide our employees with free medical cover, this motivates our employees which then make them serve the customers with utmost dedication. Since we reward best performing employees, most of our employees put a lot of effort in their work so that they may also be awarded. In so doing, they put a lot of effort in serving our customers which in turn enhances customer satisfaction."

Most of the raining managers indicated that;

“...Yes. The human capital management practices we adopt have serious impact on customer satisfaction. In our organization we have noticed that reward systems have a positive effect not only on employee performance, but also on company performance and customer satisfaction as well. However, not all reward programs are effective. Ineffective reward systems can decrease employee motivation, increase skepticism and contribute to opposition in the workplace. One manager indicated that, career development is the primary reason people join a company and stay with it. Think of Maslow’s hierarchy of needs: An individual’s fundamental needs must be met for him or her to survive.”

In addition to this, the managers added that;

“...in our organization, more powerful than incentive compensation are recognition-based incentives. Recognition among peers and co-workers can have a long-term impact on employee work engagement and job satisfaction. A cash bonus is a one-time incentive. In contrast, being recognized among your peers and fellow co-workers for going the extra mile and contributing meaningfully to the company is a lasting achievement and as we’ve seen, once our fundamental needs are met, we all want to make a difference in our lives and/or in the world.”

4.2 Correlation Analysis

Table 4: Correlation Matrix

		Customer Satisfaction	Capacity Building	Reward	Work Environment
Customer Satisfaction	Pearson Correlation	1.000			
	Sig. (2-tailed)				
Capacity Building	Pearson Correlation	.809**	1.000		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000			
Reward	Pearson Correlation	.861**	.671**	1.000	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000		
Work Environment	Pearson Correlation	.743**	.619**	.657**	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000	0.000	

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Results in table 4 revealed that all the three human capital management practices (capacity building, reward and work environment) had positive and significant association with customer satisfaction. The variable capacity building had a strong positive and significant association with customer satisfaction in the game lodges and safari camps in Uganda ($r=0.809$, $P=0.000<.05$). The result implies that capacity building is an important aspect of human capital management which significantly influences customer satisfaction. In addition the results show that the variable reward

had a strong positive and significant association with customer satisfaction in the game lodges and safari camps in Uganda ($r=0.861$, $P=000<.05$). The result implies that rewarding employees is an important aspect of human capital management which significantly influences customer satisfaction in the game lodges and safari camps in Uganda.

Finally, the results show that the variable work environment had a strong positive and significant association with customer satisfaction in the game lodges and safari camps in Uganda ($r=0.743$, $P=000<.05$). The result implies that work environment is an important aspect of human capital management which significantly influences customer satisfaction in the game lodges and safari camps in Uganda. The results are consistent with the assertions of Emmanuel, Oluwayemisi and Balogun (2015) that human capital management practices are set of practices that are focused on organizational needs to provide specific competencies. It involves a paradigm in which employee staffing perceives people as assets (human capital) whose current value can be measured and whose future value can be enhanced through investment. These practices can be categorized into workforce acquisition, management and optimization and traditional administrative tasks which includes workforce planning and strategy, recruitment on boarding, employee training, reporting and analytics.

4.3 Regression Analysis

Table 5: Model Fitness

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.927 ^a	.859	.856	.12444

a. Predictors: (Constant), Work Environment, Capacity Building, Reward

The model fitness results in Table 5 show that capacity building, reward and work environment were satisfactory variables in explaining customer satisfaction in game lodges and safari camps in national parks in Uganda. This is supported by coefficient of determination also known as the R square of 0.859. This means that capacity building, reward and work environment explain 85.9% of the variations in the dependent variable, which in this case is customer satisfaction in game lodges and safari camps in national parks in Uganda.

Table 6: Overall Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	13.818	3	4.606	297.422	.000 ^b
	Residual	2.277	147	.015		
	Total	16.095	150			

a. Dependent Variable: Customer Satisfaction

b. Predictors: (Constant), Work Environment, Capacity Building, Reward

The results in Table 6 indicate that the overall model was statistically significant. Further, the results imply that work environment, capacity building, reward are good predictors of customer

satisfaction in game lodges and safari camps in national parks in Uganda. This was supported by an F statistic of 297.422 and the reported p-value (0.000) which was less than the conventional probability of 0.05. It is therefore concluded that work environment, capacity building and reward had significant combined effect on customer satisfaction in game lodges and safari camps in national parks in Uganda.

Table 7: Multiple Regression of Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
1	(Constant)	-.076	.153		-.498	.620
	Capacity Building	.350	.044	.356	8.052	.000
	Reward	.477	.045	.489	10.631	.000
	Work Environment	.185	.040	.202	4.648	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Customer Satisfaction

The regression model therefore became;

$$CS = -.0076 + 0.350CB + 0.477R + 0.185WE$$

Where:

CS=Customer Satisfaction

CB =Capacity Building

R= Reward

WE = Work Environment

Regression coefficients in Table 7 show that there was a positive and significant relationship between capacity building and customer satisfaction ($\beta = .350$, $p=0.000$). This was supported by a calculated t-statistic of 8.052 that is larger than the critical t-statistic of 1.96. Concerning the influence of reward on customer satisfaction, the results revealed that there existed a positive and significant relationship between reward and customer satisfaction ($\beta = .477$, $p=0.000$). This was supported by a calculated t-statistic of 10.631 that is larger than the critical t-statistic of 1.96.

Lastly, regarding influence of work environment of customer satisfaction in game lodges and safari camps in national parks in Uganda the results revealed a positive and significant relationship between work environment and customer satisfaction ($\beta = 0.185$, $p=0.000$). This was supported by a calculated t-statistic of 4.648 that was greater than the critical t-statistic of 1.96. These results imply that an improvement in these three human capital management practices (capacity building, reward and work environment) leads to an improvement in customer satisfaction in game lodges and safari camps in national parks in Uganda. These findings concurs with the conclusion made by human resource management practices directly affect overall service quality in terms of customer base, customer retention, overall profit, productivity and risk improvement to the

customers. The customer satisfaction is highly depends upon the employees attitude and the service quality offered to him. The profitability and smooth earnings also affect the employees and competent human capital performance.

4.4 Hypothesis Testing

H₀₁: Capacity building has no statistically significant influence on customer satisfaction in game lodges and safari camps in national parks in Uganda

The hypothesis was tested using linear regression and determined using p-value. The acceptance/rejection criterion was that, if the p-value is $p < .05$, then H_{01} is rejected but if $p > .05$, then H_{01} is not rejected. Therefore, the null hypothesis was that capacity building has no statistically significant influence on customer satisfaction in game lodges and safari camps in national parks in Uganda. Results in Table 7 shows that the p-value = $.000 < .05$. This was supported by a calculated t-statistic of 8.052 which was larger than the critical t-statistic of 1.96. The null hypothesis was therefore rejected. The study adopted the alternative hypothesis that capacity building has statistically significant influence on customer satisfaction in game lodges and safari camps in national parks in Uganda.

H₀₂: Reward has no statistically significant influence on customer satisfaction in game lodges and safari camps in national parks in Uganda.

The hypothesis was tested using linear regression and determined using p-value. The acceptance/rejection criterion was that, if the p-value is $p < .05$, then H_{02} is rejected but if $p > .05$, then H_{02} is not rejected. Therefore, the null hypothesis was that reward has no statistically significant influence on customer satisfaction in game lodges and safari camps in national parks in Uganda. Results in Table 7 shows that the p-value = $.000 < .05$. This was supported by a calculated t-statistic of 10.631 which was larger than the critical t-statistic of 1.96. The null hypothesis was therefore rejected. The study adopted the alternative hypothesis that reward has statistically significant influence on customer satisfaction in game lodges and safari camps in national parks in Uganda.

H₀₃: Work environment has no statistically significant influence on customer satisfaction in game lodges and safari camps in national parks in Uganda.

The hypothesis was tested using linear regression and determined using p-value. The acceptance/rejection criterion was that, if the p-value is $p < .05$, then H_{03} is rejected but if $p > .05$, then H_{03} is not rejected. Therefore, the null hypothesis was that work environment has no statistically significant influence on customer satisfaction in game lodges and safari camps in national parks in Uganda. Results in Table 7 shows that the p-value = $.000 < .05$. This was supported by a calculated t-statistic of 4.648 which was larger than the critical t-statistic of 1.96. The null hypothesis was therefore rejected. The study adopted the alternative hypothesis that work environment has statistically significant influence on customer satisfaction in game lodges and safari camps in national parks in Uganda.

H₀₄: Challenges have no mediating effect on the relationship between human capital management practices and customer satisfaction in game lodges and safari camps in national parks in Uganda.

This hypothesis was tested using the multiple linear regression results. The acceptance/rejection criteria was that, if the p value is $p < .05$, then H₀₄ is rejected but if it is $p > .05$, then H₀₄ will fail to be rejected. The null hypothesis was that Challenges have no mediating effect on the relationship between human capital management practices and customer satisfaction in game lodges and safari camps in national parks in Uganda. Results showed that the p-values for all human capital management practices and mediating variable challenges (0.000, 0.000, 0.001 and 0.000) respectively, were $p < .05$ significance level for normally distributed data. The null hypothesis was therefore rejected and thus results revealed that challenges have mediating effect on the relationship between human capital management practices and customer satisfaction in game lodges and safari camps in national parks in Uganda.

Intervention or mediation is a hypothesized causative sequence where the first variable affects a second variable which in turn affects a third variable (Kenny, 2014). The study investigated the nature of mediation effect of challenges on the relationship between human capital management practices and customer satisfaction. This was to ascertain whether challenges had full or partial mediation using a four-step method where several regression analyses were run and significance of the Beta coefficients tested through the four steps (MacKinnon et al., 2007; Kenny, 2014 in Namazi & Namazi, 2016).

The following is the four-step analysis of the variables based on the results:

Step 1, Customer Satisfaction was regressed on the human capital management practices and results confirmed that all HCMP were significantly correlated with customer satisfaction.

Step 2, mediating variable (challenges) was regressed on HCMP and it was confirmed that all HCMP were significantly correlated with challenges.

Step 3, Customer satisfaction was regressed on challenges and results proved that challenges were significantly correlated with customer satisfaction.

Step 4, customer satisfaction was regressed on human capital management practices while controlling for challenges to test if the relationship between HCMP and Customer satisfaction is zero. Results confirmed that the relationship between all HCMP and customer satisfaction got weaker than in Step 1, but not to zero. This means Step 4 condition was not met thus findings supported partial mediation. The mediating variable (challenges) was therefore found to have a partial intervening effect between human capital management practices and customer satisfaction.

5.0 Conclusion

The first objective of the study was to establish the influence of capacity building on customer satisfaction in game lodges and safari camps in national parks in Uganda. Based on the findings, the study concludes that it is important for the human capital managements of game lodges and safari camps in national parks in Uganda to organize regular hospitality courses since such courses have been found to improve the knowledge and skills of employees in the industry, and that of

existing and potential managers. The study also concludes that the practices for achieving capacity management objectives are very useful on customer satisfaction in the hospitality industry.

Further, based on the findings it suffices to conclude that it is important for the managements of game lodges and safari camps in national parks in Uganda to ensure their human resource is holistically knowledgeable, skilled and competent and other attributes embodied in individuals which guide service delivery. In addition this study concludes based on the findings that capacity building positively and significantly influences customer satisfaction in game lodges and safari camps in national parks in Uganda. It is further concluded that capacity building and manpower development activities result in new knowledge, skills and management capabilities for the employees in the hospitality industry and should therefore be the focus of greater attention and efforts by organizations.

The second objective of the study was to determine the influence of reward on customer satisfaction in game lodges and safari camps in national parks in Uganda. Based on the findings, the study concludes that there's no better reward than giving employees an experience that they may need since employees value meaningful experiences more than gift cards or physical rewards. It also suffices to conclude that HR capabilities can be linked to internal employee satisfaction through rewards and organizational effectiveness. Based on the findings this study concludes that rewarding the employees provides a systems approach which enhances the organizations and employees' performance which also is coupled with customer satisfaction.

Based on the findings on correlation and regression analysis, this study concludes that reward positively and significantly associated and related with customer satisfaction. This means that when the management improves on rewarding the employees, the employees will be motivated to serve the customers with dedication which hence enhances satisfaction among the customers because satisfied customers will always be looking forward to coming back again and again.

The third objective of the study was to assess the influence of work environment on customer satisfaction in game lodges and safari camps in national parks in Uganda. Based on the findings of the study it is concluded that work environment in an organization is important in improving the customer satisfaction. Supervisor support, relation with co-workers, training and development, attractive and fast incentives and recognition plans, adequate work load at work place are helpful in developing a working environment which also has positive impact on employee's level of productivity in the organizations.

The fourth objective of the study was to investigate the mediating effect of challenges on the relationship between human capital management practices and customer satisfaction in game lodges and safari camps in national parks in Uganda. Based on the findings, the study concludes that hospitality industry in Uganda faces a number of challenges and key among them are stiff competition and attracting the right people for job openings, high cost of training employees, fluctuating foreign exchange and inflation, challenges of policies and procedures that curtail recruitment on staffing requirements for departments and finally lack of employee satisfaction, poor working conditions. This study further concludes that the work that comes with management of game lodges and safari camps is not always easy. The managers are often forced to juggle a

number of tasks at any given time from making sure that the books are balanced, employees are supervised to ensuring that everything is running smoothly. The customer is the King in the hospitality industry on the whole. The whole purpose of the industry is to keep customers happy, but the margins are now decreasing even the service that delighted customers last time would now be an expectation. So, delighting customers in the hospitality industry is getting more difficult with changing customer expectations.

6.0 Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions of this study, it is recommended that the managements of game lodges and safari camps in national parks in Uganda should develop organizational human resource trainings aimed at increasing skills and capacity of their employees. Managers should adopt new and latest methods of training their employees on modern day's ways of handling customers. Some managers in the hospitality industry in Uganda have appealed to government to continuously help train their staff in customer service and other technical disciplines in the hospitality industry. While the government is offering free training, it is recommended that the owners of the game lodges and safari camps in the country should understand that the primary responsibility to build the capacity of their own staff lies with them, not anyone else.

This study further recommends that the managements of game lodges and safari camps in Uganda should consider whatever support they receive from the government or elsewhere as a bonus or complement to what they are doing themselves. It is unacceptable that private businesses expect to be spoon-fed. They should step up to the plate and rather than calling for training programmes that are sponsored by the taxpayer, they use the existing goodwill to promote Private-Public Partnerships.

Finally, this study recommends that the owners of game lodges and safari camps in national parks in Uganda should understand that continuous training of their employees is an integral part of a successful business model and that training their staff is not a waste but an investment into their business. A skilled worker is, by far, likely to perform much better than an unskilled one, thus a boost to the health of the business and improving on customer satisfaction.

This study adds to existing theory and practice of hospitality industry resource based view of firms which is relatively the fastest growing industry in the world. The study builds on Resource Based View and Maslow's hierarchy of needs theories to explain and practically answer the problem under study. Data in the study provides indication that the RBV and Maslow's hierarchy theories may advance further as it pertains to hospitality industry management in developing countries of Africa. In a new competitive model it is recommended that government and managements of hospitality industry related stakeholders in the micro-environment, should play a complementing role of supplementing the intangible firm assets necessary to drive the local hospitality industry in Uganda through proper human capital management practices to invest and share more resources in industry coordination, training, infrastructure development, marketing, ICT and financing to support local enterprises resulting to higher and consistent performance of the industry.

This study makes recommendations that have multiple areas with policy implications. The government of Uganda public policy making organs should involve all stakeholders in the design

of strategies and policies for promoting the hospitality industry in the country. This will ensure representation of all the stakeholder perceptions and welfare related with the management of human capital in the industry. The political climate of a country, city, or destination greatly affects both the tourism and hospitality industry. Issues regarding national security, political stability, suppression of democracy, etc. affect how visitors, tourists, and guests view a destination. This means, a negative perception through media affects tourist arrivals, affects cancellations in hotels and other ancillary services, which in turn means less revenue. This also means less employment opportunities for tourism and hospitality professionals because of the political aspect of the destination. This study therefore recommends that the policy makers should come up with policies cushioning hospitality industry against harm by political atmosphere in the country.

The study also found out that capacity building positively and significantly influence customer satisfaction in the industry. The study therefore recommends that there should be policies in place to ensure mandatory refresher courses or special training in hospitality industry in Uganda for the staffs of the game lodges and safari camps to equip them with the necessary prerequisite knowledge skills to be able to perform their tasks effectively. There should be staff retention policies in place also to retain staff and reward talents in the hospitality industry.

Finally, the findings of the study indicated that challenges had a very strong partial intervening effect on the relationship between human capital management practices and customer satisfaction. The study therefore recommends that government measures should be put in place to ensure support of the hospitality industry through enacting laws that promote and impose standards on formal creation of game lodges and safari camps and to protect these organizations against government policies negatively affecting the industry. Also government should enact effective policies that strengthen coordination between hospitality industry players and the tourism related organizations; Ministries of Tourism, ICT and Finance. This will facilitate the execution of mandates bestowed to them like training, marketing, financing, facilitating and regulating various tourism industry ventures.

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